

It would almost follow then that we might find, if that investigation were made, that the workers between perhaps 40 and 65 may make up the bulk of the so-called chronic relief recipient cases. If so, in my opinion that makes this legislation even more desirable at this time.

The figure 45, the age grouping at age 45, seems to have been selected for this legislation, but we find that the worker who loses his job after long-term employment in a particular industry finds himself in the same predicament at the age of 40 as he would at age 45. Do you find that increased fringe benefit programs that are being put into labor contracts, and added social security, are drawbacks to their being able to find jobs?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Yes, sir. All these fringe costs, insurance, workmen's compensation, private pensions, all these costs are factors which mitigate against employment of a worker in this age bracket who is out of a job and looking for a job.

I think one of the purposes of the research called for would be a thorough analysis of this to come up with a practical answer to these problems. These problems can be answered through other forms of insurance or pooled risks, something like that.

But if we got into real research looking for practical answers, I think we could find them. These are the things that mitigate against the reemployment.

Mr. DENT. I was interested to note in your prepared statement on page 5 you make the same point this committee is trying to make in discrimination, that is, prejudice is not prevailing in job discrimination when it comes to the aging. Is there evidence, to your knowledge, of any bias, prejudice, or blind opposition to an older worker rather than the fact it is an economic situation?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Both factors seem to be present. Employers are reluctant to hire older persons for a variety of economic reasons. These are the ones I mentioned earlier that we ought to be able to find answers to.

In addition there is the question of prejudice. Some people feel they are dealing with the stereotype of older workers, that he is fragile, rigid, or crotchety. When it comes to the prejudice aspect of this problem, we can overcome that through educational programs. When it comes to the economic problems, we have to come up with practical answers.

This bill provides for doing both. My point is the same as yours, rank prejudice is not as common as other type prejudices. It is a subtle thing.

Mr. DENT. There is some demand that this legislation be put under the Equal Opportunities Office. Would you favor such a motion?

Mr. SPRAGUE. No. I would not and I think the National Council on the Aging would not favor that. We feel that other forms of prejudice are distinctly different from age discrimination. We think age discrimination has with it too many other economic factors and should not be dealt with by equal-opportunities legislation.

Mr. DENT. It seems to this member that that is a sound observation. Age can easily be cataloged, records can prove such a thing, whereas if we include it with the so-called traditional discrimination basis, race, color, religion, and so forth, it might get mixed up with many factors. This members feels that is a sound position to take.